

The Humble
REPRESENTATION
AND
VINDICATION

Of many of the Messengers, Elders,
and Brethren, belonging to several of the
BAPTIZED CHURCHES in this Nation,
of and concerning their Opinions and Resolutions
touching the CIVIL GOVERNMENT
of these Nations, and of their Deportment under
the same.

Together with a Cautionary word from two
of the Messengers to their Brethren, to bespeak their
peaceable subjection to the present Government.

Many of the Messengers, Elders and Brethren
of the Baptized Churches, having from several
parts of this Nation, met together in
the City of London, to consider how and
which way the Affairs of the Gospel of Christ, so far
as it concerns them, might be best promoted, and all
divisions and offences contrary thereto removed or
prevented, have also thought it necessary to publish
and declare their Judgements and consciences touching
the Civil power of the Nation, partly to vindicate
themselves from some aspersions hereabout unduly
and without cause cast upon them; and partly to rectify
all mens misapprehensions of them. It hath been, indeed, as well matter of grief to them

as of prejudice to the way of truth professed by them, to hear themselves frequently and upon all occasions, mis-reported and mis-represented; so, as if they were no friends to Magistracy and Civil Government:

Whereas (the Lord knows, who should they not be upright herein, would be a swift Witness against them) they hold themselves obliged by Gospel rules, to be subject to the Higher Powers, to obey the Magistrates, and submit to every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake. And in case the Civil powers do, or shall, at any time impose things about matters of Religion, which they, through conscience to God, cannot actually obey, yet they know no other way in this case, but either patiently to suffer, or humbly to intreat favour.

Neither do they hold themselves so much concerned to know the dueness and undueness of the Call of persons to the Rule and Government of Nations, as that their knowledge therof, or ignorance therein, should either further or hinder their quiet and peaceable submission to them, but that it becomes them always to acknowledge the powers that are in present being, to be of God.

And as it is a duty incumbent upon all Christians to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all that are in Authority; so they do accordingly with all their hearts acknowledge that they are bound to bless the God of Heaven for that Peace and Liberty they do enjoy under the present Government, and still to pray for those that are in Authority, that under them they may live peaceable and quiet lives in all godliness and honesty.

And

And if any particular persons under the same Form of Profession with them, shall at any time be found to act or speak any thing contrary hereunto (as it is possible there may be in these times, as well as in the first times of the Gospel, such found, as despite Dominion, and are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities) yet they greatly desire all men that hear and know any such thing, not to impute such miscarriages unto their way in which they walk, or unto the generality of persons engaged therein, but only to the persons themselves so offending, as being such as either are, or deserve to be dealt withal for such disorderly walking.

No do they know any ground for the Saints, as such, to expect that the Rule and Government of the world should be put into their hands, until that day in which the Lord Jesus shall visibly descend from Heaven in power and great glory, when indeed they verily believe, that according to the Scriptures, the Kingdoms of this world, shall become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ; and that then the Kingdom, and Dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole Heaven, shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most High; but till then they rather expect it as their portion, patiently to suffer from the world, as the Scriptures direct them, and as the Saints usually have done, then any wise to attain the Rule and Government thereof.

Nevertheless their opinion is, that though the Saints as such are not to expect an interest and share in the Government of the World, until the good day aforesaid; yet in the capacity of honest and faithful men ought, when called thereunto, to yield their best

assistance in and about the management of the Civil Government of Kingdoms or Common-wealths.

And in as much as our Saviour Christ hath given this as one sign, not long preceding his next coming, saying, *This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all Nations; and then shall the end come.* Their hope therefore is, that in these latter daies, at least for a time, God will by the hands of such Civil Powers as shall favour the Saints, open a door of greater liberty to the Saints, for the spreading of the Gospel in the Nations of the World, then usually hath been enjoined in times past: And do verily believe that that measure of liberty this way, which hath of late years been allowed the people of God, hath not contributed a little (God being pleased therewith) toward those marvellous and unwonted successes, which have been given to those, who have been instruments to procure the same.

Signed by some of the Messengers and Elders of the Baptized Churches, present at this meeting in London, for themselves and in the behalf of the respective Congregations to which they belong.

Messengers.

Sam. Fisher, Will. Jeffery,
Nath. Roe, Rich. Kingnos,
Jas. Sicklemore, Mat. Caffin,
John Wilson, Ben. Morley,
Jab. Lupton, Abrab. Clough,
Tho. Munk, John Hartnal,
John Fexwel.

Elders.

John Griffith, Tho. Perrot,
Will. Allen, Tho. Lamb,
Geo. Haman, Job. Parsons,
Ed. Blundell, Job. Templeman,
Tho. Askey, Stephen Dagnal,
Rob. Thomson, John Reeve.

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A Cautionary Word from two of
the Messengers to the Brethren, the baptized Churches,
to bespeak their peaceable subjection to
the present Government.

Beloved Brethren,

BT the Providence of God meeting together here at London, and taking occasion, as well for our own personal satisfaction, as that we might be the more capable to satisfy such of the Saints in all parts, as have been under the same suspitions and jealousies with our selves, to enquire of such, as we supposed could most certainly assure us, what might be the purposes of the present Power, as to the performance of the Oath and Engagements by them taken to maintain the form of Government established in the Instrument, and therein the libertie of our consciences in matters pertaining to the worship of our God according to the 36, 37, 38. Articles thereof, and knowing how apt both you and we have been by many mis-representations thereof to misjudge their actions; as if (notwithstanding their professed good intentions toward us, as well as all others that are reformed from Popery and Prelacy yet in pursuance of their own greatness (who probably might be greater yet, if they would so do) they would close in with the single Interest of such as seek the suppressing of us, and all that conform not to their more divine then divine directories under the name of Hereticks, and (as to matter of truth & tyth) again sacrifice us as a prey to their pitiless precepts, and pitiless purses, that take tyth of us for talking against us, and that truth too, which, in contradiction to them, is held forth by us, we held it our duty in order to the dispossessing you of all overhasty and unchristian prejudices of this Nature, to intimate to you the hopes that

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we cannot but have (if solemn professions thereof so such as you may safely credit, may as all be credited, and if either they may not, or may and be not, the Lord will once Judge between them and us) that they will have such just respects to that interest, which we have in the Instrument in common with others, as to preserve it, and that as truly and faithfully (to their powers) as we in truth, and faithfulness do desire: that they should Preserve the conscience-interest of all other peaceable people, of what religion soever, as well as ours. And howbeit it will hardly content High Presbyterian Spirits to enjoy their own liberties in worship, unless all that dance not after their Pipe (at least when it sounds to the Tune of Tythes) be bereaved of theirs, and (contrarily to Christs mind Mat. 13. if they were as truly tares, as it is true that many such are the purest wheat rooted out, as tares, from standing together with them in the field, i.e. the world till the Harvest, i.e. the end; yet we dare not but conclude with confidence, that the Lord will so dispose their Spirits, that we shall not onely be continued by them in that liberty to serve the Lord, which (through Gods mercy to us) we have been hitherto secured in under the present Government, but also by Removal of that terrible trebble yoke of Tyths (the only Romish relike standing yet removed, & with rigidity imposed upon us) be established in more peace than ever yet from all those pressures in the case of our consciences, which (if we be not more covetous than conscientious) we groan under more then under those that sit heavy upon our purses; and this in due season, and so soon as our better being in that particular shall be found consistent with the well being of those thousands, out of whose utter ruins we would not willingly rise, and also with the very being of the Common-wealth itself, which is very hardly yet saved from dying by all the care that could hitherto be improved to secure it, such deep designs

to destroy it, at least our interest in it, are ever and ever discovered to be driven on by them that hate us. Wherefore, holy Brethren, we beseech you in the Bowels, & name of Christ Jesus, that you have patience a while, & satisfy yourselves under some smaller sufferings rather than (as many do in those daies) run out into rash censurs of their transactions, who are in high places of power over us, and (for ought we know) improving themselves, whilst we think evil of them, & do us good, and beware of them that despise Dominion and speak evil of Dignities, specially so long as we see that our Rulers (as they are the Ordinance of God to us for good) so are accordingly not a terror to us in any good works we do, but in such only as are, not interpretatively only (as some good works may be) but truly evil; and let none of you suffer as an evil doer, as a Murderer, Adulterer, Thief or Drunkard, Railer or Reviler, by which sad sufferings many Saints in shew pull sufferings sometimes from Civil Powers on such as are Saints in truth, but, if we must suffer at all, let us suffer as Christians, so may we glorify God in that behalf, for it is better, if the will of God so be, that we should suffer for well, then for evil doing. Beware also of being hastily wrapt in to a siding with such as are given to murmurings, and complainings; after changes of what Government at present is, for that, which (for ought we know) may be far worse, for the calamity of such as are given to change, either backward to the old blind way, or forward in any new heady way, may come suddenly, and who knoweth the ruin of them both? but rather Brethren let us be thankful to God, and (as Paul was both to Festus and Agrippa, the best of which was but almost a Christian) respectful to our Governors, giving to them (though we be sensible of some fault for withholding that Popish pay called Tythes) the Civilities of Honour, Custome and Tribute that are due to them in their respective places, for any civil, but especially for all that spiritual freedom we

partake of under them, the 17th of which would have more
 then pleased us, not above some ten years behind us. Finally
 praying for them also, at the mind of God is that we should
 1 Tim. 2.2. that we may live a peaceable and quiet life un-
 der them in all godliness and honesty. So doing we shall as-
 suredly be acceptable unto God, and if our Serving of God
 will not be so acceptable to them, but that (living as honestly
 and holily as we can) we shall still suffer persecution from
 them, then deliverance will arise to us another way, even
 from our Supreme L. Protector Christ Jesus, at his coming,
 when all that tyrannize over tender consciences, and tread
 down truth, under what pretence soever, much more un-
 der meer pretence of willingnesse to do them good, shall
 be destroyed:

Your Brethren and Com-
 panions in the Kingdom
 and patience of Christ Jesus;

Samuel Fisher,

James Sicklemore.

FINIS.

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 his shop in Flying-Horse Court in Fleetstreet, 1692.

